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Fiji: Rule of law or rule by force

Today's Court of Appeal ruling in Fiji upholding the Constitution is a landmark human rights decision which supports the rule of law over rule by force, Amnesty International said.

Fiji's Interim Prime Minister, in a first reaction to the judgment which ruled that the government which took over after the May coup was illegal, has suggested that a different "standard of human rights" applied in Fiji.

"Human rights are internationally recognized as universal - they apply equally everywhere for everyone. Fiji needs to find a way of solving its problems in accordance with these international standards, recognizing that indigenous rights are equal - not superior - to other human rights. Racial discrimination, or even racist violence, cannot be justified," the organization said.

"In UN peace-keeping operations, Fiji soldiers have died in defence of human rights and the rule of law. Amnesty International urges the Great Council of Chiefs and the Interim Administration to now defend these fundamental values at home."

The Fiji authorities' response to today's Court of Appeal judgment on constitutional rights will be an example for future generations and far beyond the Pacific, Amnesty International said.

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